

Cardiovascular Health & Nebraska Schools

Supports for Responding to Heart Attack and Stroke within Nebraska's Public Middle and High Schools



INTRODUCTION

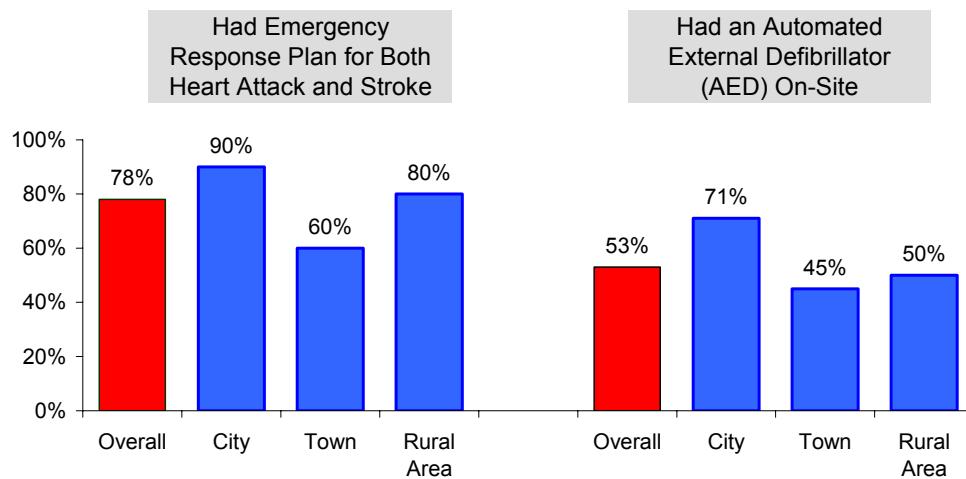
Within the school setting, having an emergency response plan for responding to heart attack and stroke and having an automated external defibrillator (AED) can potentially save lives among youth and adults within a community. Schools house a large number of people on a regular basis, including both children who attend the school and adults who are either employed at the school or are attending an extracurricular activity.

An AED is a computerized medical device that checks a person's heart rhythm. It can recognize a heart rhythm that requires a shock, such as when someone has a sudden cardiac arrest, and it can advise the rescuer when a shock is needed. AEDs are very accurate and relatively easy to use (however, it is best if a trained individual administers the AED). The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends making AEDs available in public and/or private places where large numbers of people gather.

FINDINGS, reported during 2005 by administrators (primarily principals) within Nebraska's middle and high schools

- Emergency Response Planning for Heart Attack and Stroke
 - 85 percent of schools had an emergency response plan for heart attack, while 78 percent had an emergency response plan for stroke.
 - Overall, 78 percent of schools had an emergency response plan for both heart attack and stroke (Figure 1). This 78 percent of schools housed 80 percent of the (state's public middle and high school) student population.
 - The percentage of schools with an emergency response plan for both heart attack and stroke was lower in Nebraska's towns (60%) than it was in the cities (90.0%) and rural areas (80.0%).
- Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Nebraska's Public Middle and High Schools
 - Just over half of all schools (53%) had an AED on site (Figure 1). However, this 53 percent of schools did house 62 percent of the (state's public middle and high school) student population.
 - The percentage of schools with an AED was higher in Nebraska's cities (71%) than it was in the towns (45%) and rural areas (50%).
 - Among schools with an AED:
 - 74% had one AED while 26% had more than one.
 - 96% reported having the AED in a clearly marked and easily accessible location.
 - 88% reported that someone with AED training is on site during normal school hours.
 - 62% reported that someone with AED training is on site during school-sponsored events held at the school.
 - Among schools that did not have an AED:
 - 27% were planning to install one in the next six months.
 - 38% would like more information on the health and financial benefits of AEDs.

Figure 1: Percentage of Nebraska Public Middle and High Schools That Had Heart Attack and Stroke Supports in 2005



Note: City=schools within a MSA that are in a city or on the fringe of a city; town=schools located outside a MSA that are located within a town; rural area=schools located within or outside a MSA that are in a rural area

Source: 2005 Nebraska School Administrator Survey

CONCLUSION

More than one-fifth of middle and high schools in Nebraska do not have an emergency response plan that includes both heart attack and stroke. The NE Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Program believes that all schools should have an emergency response plan that includes information on responding to heart attacks and strokes that occur on school property. This simple and inexpensive process could save the lives of students and community members. The NE CVH Program does not endorse that all middle and high schools have an AED. However, having an AED on the school premises, along with a staff person trained in how to administer the AED could potentially save the lives of people in Nebraska who experience a sudden cardiac arrest in or near a Nebraska school.

METHODS

The Nebraska Health and Human Services System collected the data presented in this fact sheet between December 2004 and March 2005 through a random mail survey of public middle and high school principals in Nebraska. A total of 284 schools completed the survey, for an 82 percent response rate. Results were weighted to represent all public middle and high schools in Nebraska.

Fact sheet was prepared by the Nebraska Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Program, March 2006. For additional results, methodology, or other information about these data or the Nebraska CVH Program, please visit the CVH Program website www.hhss.ne.gov/CVH or call 402-471-2101.



NEBRASKA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM

